HIJAB IN ISLAM

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The issue of women's right has been the most complicated one in the human history. All the Civilizations of the world have adopted the two extreme positions on this matter. Rome, Greece and Europe had tested the two extremes throughout their history. Some civilized nations like Greece once and presently the so-called civilized Western nations have equated them with men in every sphere of life. They drew them out of their homes for total emancipation. While other Country like ancient Persia went to other extreme, describing women as a blunder of Nature and a creature, which ought to be ignored. (1) The Greece, Rome and Christian Europe regarded women as the root cause of evil, gateway to Satan and an unavoidable creature. The women had no value and no status in the society. (2) Hinduism regarded women as a salable commodity. The women were deprived of basic human rights. Even a widow had to burn herself with the dead body of her husband. (3) The Islamic viewpoint regarding women is quite moderate. Unlike the other religions and civilizations of the world, it offers a divine solution to this matter. It directly addresses the nature and appeals to the heart of human beings. It adopts middle path and takes into consideration the physical formation of the women to give them their due status in human society.

Women in Islam

According to Islam women are equal partners to men in building a human society. They have their own rights, privileges and status. They play important and equally significant role in the development of human civilization. They must be given education and training so that they can efficiently perform their duties. They have right to chose their spouse and enjoy their life. They inherit property from their father and husband. When she is a child her father has responsibility to bring her up and to provide educational facilities. When she is a wife it is her husband's duty to respect her sentiments and give her due rights. When she is a mother her son is asked to behave gently and provide extraordinary love and care and remain obedient to her. The women have been assigned the duty to look after homely affairs. They have to arrange home well and take care of the family members. They have been given instructions by Islam to put veil on their bodies and not to display their feminist charm to outsiders.

Why women have been ordered to manage home?

Here is a common question asked by Non-Muslims 'why only women are forced to cover and veil. Before we go to answer we must understand some natural facts so that we can realize the situation in a broader perspective.

It is a universal fact that every creature doesn't hold same status. As human beings are supreme to all, so only a senseless person is going to equate them with animals. In the same fashion all the creatures have been categorized by nature itself. Even the duties and mental approach of them differ from sex to sex. This is an absolute truth, none can deny.

The women have been given a different type of physical and psychological system from men. The biological and scientific researches reveal the fact that the women have entirely different structure ranging from body formation to the cells and particles of body. Having being grown

up she undergoes menstruation every month and pregnancy now and then. It is medically proved that a woman is nearer to illness in menstruating and pregnancy days. She loses her temper and suffers from many abnormal changes. A mother has to suckle her baby and nourish. It requires full time attention.(4) Because of these natural and physical reasons a woman is not able to discharge her duties like earning livelihood, sponsoring family, working hard, govern a country, fighting in the battle field and deal with the challenges of the world. It is unjust on her part to put these duties on her weak shoulder. Biologically women are to bear a child and nurse. Their advancement is to make their biological nature grow not to suppress it and turn to an opposite direction. Therefor Islam has drawn a different framework for both man and woman. The women have full freedom to excel in their field. The duty of nursing a child and management of the house is of greater value than to earn money. If a woman earns bread she serves an ordinary purpose and leaves the important one incomplete. If she nourishes a child with full attention she will cooperate the society to produce a good and noble member for it. This job is much more important for her than the first one. Even Antom Nimlov, a renowned communist scientist of Soviet Union admits this fact and writes in his book "The Biological Tragedy of Women":

"Biologically men and women are not equal and they were not put equal burdens."(5)

Apart from biological aspect, the women were equal to men historically. There passed many civilizations on this earth which gave them chances to go ahead shoulder to shoulder with men but they failed. Nowhere in the world women could prevail over the men. There were only men who ruled the world, in general, and dominated the history.

Purdah for Women

Purdah code in Islam is well connected with that of marriage and Islamic family system. The West considers the society a group of individuals free to indulge in any activity that involves them personally. On the contrary, Islam considers all society a unit. It does not allow an individual to carry out such an action that damages the social structure though it is confined apparently to his/her personality.

Islam believes that a human civilization can survive only when the society is clean, pious, systematic, and responsible. The success of the society lies in its spiritual development. Free sexual relation, uncontrolled carnal desires, shamelessness and nudity is disastrous for society. It will lead it to a horrible end. Even some western writers have admitted that the family system is a must for any flourishing society. The last president of Soviet Union Michael Gorbachov says in his book "Prostraika" chapter "status of women":

"Our family system has been destroyed. It will put an end to our nation. The disadvantages of women emancipation are more than its advantages"(6)

So Islam has put certain restrictions and regulations in order to protect. It has forbidden marriage between close relatives (Gair Mahram) to purify the family atmosphere and lessen the chances of sexual relations to the least degree. It commands Muslims to marry as soon as it is possible. Islam asks men to cover always their body from umbilicus centre to kneel while the women were commanded to cover their body except the face, hand and feet all the time. It is unlawful for both men and women to open these parts before any person other than their spouses. Women have been prohibited to go out and walk about without any obvious reason. They should lower their voice and not to talk to outsiders with softness in their speech. If they go outside they have to fulfill the condition of Purdah. The Holy Qura'an says:

"Stay at home and do not show off in the manner of the women of the days of ignorance."(7)

"O' prophet! direct the wives and daughters and the women of the believers that they should put down their outer cloaks from their head over their faces. This will make it possible for them to be distinguished so that they will not be molested"(8)

(3)" Direct the believing women to restrain their looks and guard their senses and not disclose any part their beauty or adornments, save that which is apparent thereof……"(9)

According to these verses she has to cover her face too when outside. Nearly all the Islamic scholars have stated that women should cover their faces. They can open the eyes if needed. It is better for them to open only one eye.

In Islam a woman should stay in house even it is better for her to offer prayers in a corner of her home. It is of greater virtue than to attend congregation in the mosque. When a woman goes out she attracts the undue attention of people. This attention promotes sexual lust and urges a man to commit adultery. So in the sight of Islam a bad glimpse is the first step towards adultery that causes a good deal of harm and ruination to the society. That is why the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"the eyes commit adultery and it is their looking (at forbidden things), the hands commit adultery and it is their catching (the forbidden), the legs commit adultery and it is their walking (towards forbidden) and the adultery of tongue is talking (to prohibited persons), and the heart wishes then (finally) the private parts confirm it (by doing) or belie it (by avoiding)."(10)

Looking deeply into the social teachings of Islam and the capital punishments set for adulterers and adulteress, it appears that Islam has eased the conditions of marriage and made adultery difficult enough. Isalm not only ordered women to veil their body but it has commanded men also to shun to cast a brazen and bad look at women. They were instructed to lower their gaze and guard their modesty. The Quraan says:

"Direct the believing men to restrain their looks and to guard their senses. That is purer for them."(11)

Here a question may be raised that according to Islam when women are not permitted to come out of home then how they will satisfy their need. It is noteworthy that Islam has solved their financial problem. Being a daughter she will be fed and brought up by her father. Being a wife she will be paid and given all facilitates by her husband. If she is a sister or mother her brother or son will provide money, food and all necessities of life. If there happens no male to care for her then the Muslims of the locality or an Islamic state is responsible respectively. It is obligatory on men to give the women their due rights. All the details are mentioned in Fiqh books.

Employment & Business for Woman

Apart from this she can do business and make money. She is allowed to join an institution or office to strengthen her economic status. But there is a condition she must fulfill it. She will never be allowed to show her body and be a plaything in the hands of males. She cannot work at a place where she is not safe from male intervention. (12)

Some people object that Islam has deprived women of opportunities to advance and suppressed their inner abilities. Only those who have no knowledge of Islamic history and women's natural abilities raise this question. Muslim women have their own remarkable history. There were women teachers who used to teach men. The women used to be scholars, writers and pious (waliah). There were mothers who follow Hijab code brought up countless giant, genius and towering personalities of the world. Instead of being hurdle, Hijab helped them to reach the heights of fame and utilize the inner capabilities given to them. Hijab helps men and women both to utilize their time and opportunities in a constructive direction. When a man and woman are attracted towards each other they waste their time, money and abilities in frivolities. It is only Hijab that prevents them to kill their energies in petty rather destructive matters.

Equality in Islam

Today the West shouts slogans of women emancipation and equality. As per the West a woman is free to live as she likes. None can object on her action, relation and speech. She can run in the work field parallel with men. Islam also gives her equality and liberty, but they differ from those of the West. Islam gives a woman equal justice, equal protection, equal honour and equal rights to live. But it does not believe in the equality of work field because the field of their work is different from men. If the women are driven out of their field and taken to that of men the whole system will be reduced to chaos. It will harm the society more, for they will not be able to produce a good person for the future of the society. It will be just "killing the goose that lays the golden eggs". Islam provides her full freedom in term of speech, movement and relationship. Interestingly, the advancements that the West has given to women is not appreciable because it has not given them these advancements as a woman. They have brought them to this height turning them into men. Their slogans of equality and freedom are empty and hollowed. There is no ground reality that is seen. Not only this but they have added burdens to the women's homely work cleverly in the name of emancipation and equality. Now women are supposed to look after the child, cook the food, arrange the home and go to office to earn money. Men share their responsibilities with women but none comes the women's burden and work. This is not only a mere exploitation but also rather a criminal act. The women in West could not come yet upto the grade of men. Men have been occupying all the important posts and status. Women are only exploited employees and workers. Equality and liberty is just a lip service and paper writing. On the contrary they have used women as an instrument of entertainment and enjoyment. They have pulled them out of their houses to the streets, offices, dancing clubs and beer bars just to serve their own end. The concept of women emancipation is nothing but an illusion. Antom Nimlov, a communist author is bound to say in his book "The Biological Tragedy of Women:

"If any one talk of giving less right to women a few people will support it. We ourselves will oppose. But we should not deceive ourselves that a practical equality between men and women is as easy as we think. Soviet Union has given them more rights than any country of the world, but the fact is that women could not find their positions."(13)

"If a man treats women equally the women themselves consider it a weakness of the man. There is neither a scientist, an author, a businessman, a communist nor a student who considers women equal to him."(14)

Finally, the sisters are requested to deliberate the matter thoroughly. It is better for them not to fall prey of "women emancipation & equality" because they biologically, naturally and historically are not to chase the men. Producing a noble, intelligent and talented child is, in no

way, of less important. Actually it is women to whom goes the credit of men's greatness. The West has deprived them of their freedom and mental peace. It has made them a puppet in the hands of tyrant men. They use women on every step of life and put extra burdens on them.

Conclusion

- No religion or civilization of the world has given women their due rights
- Islam has a moderate and divine view point regarding women
- Women are as important as men
- Women are the supervisors of internal affairs while men have to deal with the outside world.
- Women have rights as men
- The slogan of women emancipation in West is an illusion
- The West expolites women. The women have to do their work and support the men too.
- Women are naturally, biologically and historically not able to discharge hard duties.
- The prosperity of a society lies in an tight family system
- The western civilization who ignored family system is on the edge of destruction
- Hijab protects a family-bound society from perishing
- Hijab is a beauty and a symbol of dignity for women
- Hijab does not bar women to achieve high goals.

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